

RIT Archives Collection Development Policy

January 2022

PURPOSE

This living document aspires to lay out how, why, and what we collect, and our ongoing commitment to ethical stewardship. The values and policies stated here are reviewed regularly by RIT Archives staff and community stakeholders.

Collection development traditionally has been about the collections; but RIT Archives is focused on the how and why of taking in these materials. Ultimately considerations around resource allocation such as storage, supplies, preservation and conservation, and staffing are of central importance.

Current priorities are centered on education, and building strategic collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders as well as creating the necessary infrastructure for digital preservation.

The staff of RIT Archives arrange and describe collections so that the collections become visible and accessible. Through digital and physical exhibits, teaching, digitizing, and public programming, the staff of RIT Archives seeks to engage creatively and innovatively with donors, researchers, and the RIT community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni, through the collections under its care.

AUDIENCE

Audiences for this document include:

Potential donors
Donors
RIT Administration
RIT Faculty & Staff
RIT Alumni
Researchers
Library and Archives Professionals

COLLECTING SCOPE

Beginning with a box from the Registrar's office in 1960, the RIT Archives has grown into a multifaceted collection. Although RIT Archives cannot collect everything, we aim for increasing transparency around the how and why of our collecting decisions. The Archives staff has established guidelines to determine consistently and transparently what records are of enduring value.

These guidelines take into account ongoing assessment of past, present, and future collecting activities, as outlined below. Records and materials are collected in all mediums and formats; materials can be print, non-print, photographic, digital, or artifacts. We look forward to considering materials related to both our current and new collecting areas.

University Archives

The collections within the university archives document the life and culture of RIT and its predecessor institutions.

Current Collecting Areas:

- Administration – records created by RIT departments and colleges; [RIT Records Management](#) program
- Curricula -- materials from specific courses taught at RIT, broad curriculum development, etc.
- Theses/dissertations
- Student experience and student culture on RIT campus -- academic and extracurricular activities
- RIT and related websites through [Archive-It](#)
- Faculty papers
- RIT history
- Commencement and convocation
- History of photography
- Oral/Video histories of RIT community members
- Art created by RIT students, faculty, and alumni

New Collecting Areas:

- Sciences and technology
- Computing history at RIT
- College of Health Sciences and Technology
- International campuses: Dubrovnik, Croatia; Zagreb, Croatia; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Pristina, Kosovo; Weihai, China
- Graduate programs
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) curricula
- Golisano Institute for Sustainability
- Computing and Information Sciences
- Intersectional identities
- Staff activities and culture
- Community partnerships with RIT

Deaf Studies, Culture, and History Archives

The Deaf Studies, Culture, and History Archives (DSA) was established to ensure that the cultural heritage and lives of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) and connected Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and hard of hearing (“Deaf”) communities are preserved. The DSA collects materials that will increase knowledge of the history and culture of NTID and connected Deaf community members, and strengthen identity formation and pride.

Current Collecting Areas

- NTID history and publications
- NTID administrative history
- Deaf student experience on RIT campus
 - Student culture
 - Student clubs, organizations, government
- Deaf technology
- Deaf organizations - national and local
- Performing Arts for the Deaf
 - Deaf theater
 - Deaf dance
 - Deaf poetry
 - Sign Language performance
- Books, films, and posters with Deaf characters
- Deaf art/artists
 - De’VIA
- Community relations and Deaf awareness
- Deaf pedagogy
 - Faculty and educators
 - Interpreter education and history
 - Deaf primary and secondary education
 - Deaf higher education

New Collecting Areas

- Visual history recordings capturing current Deaf student and alumni experiences
- Deaf lived experience from the early-mid 19th Century
- Intersectional Deaf identities

- Deaf activism (i.e. Audism)
- Deaf faculty/staff experiences
- NTID curricula history
- NTID Administration-- includes records created by NTID departments and colleges; NTID Records Management program
 - With specific intent to document the Access Department, which includes interpreters, note-takers, and captionists.
- Deaf assisted technology after 2000 (digital assistive technology)
- Late-20th century to present Deaf performance and poetry

Special Collections

RIT Archives has a number of collections that fall outside its primary scope but complement the overall holdings. While collections in this category may not always be centered at RIT they reflect the history and goals of the university.

Specific Special Collections include:

[B. Thomas Golisano collection](#)

Blaise Thomas “Tom” Golisano is the founder of the payroll processing company, Paychex, and previous co-owner of the Buffalo Sabres hockey team. Golisano is a major donor to RIT and currently has two colleges named after him, Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences and Golisano Institute for Sustainability.

[John Scott Clubb collection](#)

Clubb's editorial cartoons appeared daily in Rochester newspapers for over 30 years. Clubb began his career in 1900 at *The Rochester Herald*, where he stayed until 1926. From 1926 until his death in 1934, Clubb was a cartoonist at the *Rochester Times-Union*.

Books

RIT Archives collects some published books on an ongoing basis.

- RIT History
 - We actively collect published materials related to university history, as well as selected books authored by RIT faculty, staff, and community members.
- Books directly connected to the archival and manuscript collections held by RIT

Archives.

ACQUISITIONS

Before we accept donations or make purchases—whether of single items or a sizable collection—we carefully assess such factors as condition, fit with collection strategy, gift terms, and anticipated processing, conservation, and storage costs.

Donations

RIT Archives accepts donations that are consistent with our collection development policy, especially in the areas listed above. If RIT Archives is offered a donation that is out of scope, we might refer the donor to another institution with a more relevant collecting focus. We also welcome referrals of materials from other institutions. We have made efforts to ensure that our collecting areas do not overlap extensively with other institutions.

Please complete the RIT Archives Donation Form with any questions regarding your potential donation: <https://www.rit.edu/archives/rit-archives-donation-form>

Once it has been determined that the item(s) will be accepted, donors will be sent a draft Deed of Gift form.

Please note that we are unable to provide monetary appraisals for your donation, but we can provide a list of local appraisers.

Purchases

RIT Archives generally does not acquire collection materials through purchases, although we have one established program through which items are purchased:

Purchase Prize

The Art and Photography Purchase Prize Awards programs were founded in 1972 (Art) and 1981 (Photo) with the goal of capturing the diversity of work made by RIT students in the programs. Each year, art works are purchased from Master's of Fine Arts thesis exhibits, and photo works are purchased from the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences Student Honor Show, a juried exhibition open to students in all departments of the school. These collections provide a visual history of RIT's Art and Photography disciplines and reflect the changes in style, subject, medium, and processes over time.

Bequests

Bequests receive the same consideration as other potential acquisitions.

ACQUISITIONS CRITERIA

Archival value is subjective, and these criteria are guidelines to help us make necessary decisions as consistently as possible.

Authenticity/Originality/Uniqueness

Many records of an archival nature share these traits. When appraising a collection, we will often ask:

- “Are these records authentic?” (That is, are they what they purport to be)
- “Are these records original?” (That is, are these not a copy but the initial version of themselves)
- “Are these records unique?” (This is why published works are not often considered archival)

A note on originality: There are many materials of archival value that are copies of an original source because the original may no longer exist or may be otherwise inaccessible. In addition, digital records are rarely original, as the functions of digital systems necessitate iterative copying. Thus, originality may not be a barrier to acquisition.

Subject

A collection’s subject matter may come from many places - textual topic, format, cultural context, use, or creator. We strive to collect within our Collecting Scope since we have to be strategic about what is added to the archives. We do not want to bring in materials just to have them sit on the shelves; collections are meant to be used.

Medium/format

Types of physical, digital, and born digital materials we’ll consider include but are not limited to:

- Diaries, journals, blogs
- Oral history interviews
- Visual history interviews
- Personal letters and emails relating to RIT experiences
- Original images or photographs
- Student publications

Please note that in most cases we remove frames from all framed materials as it is more space efficient and ultimately for the materials.

Types of materials we don’t consider due to preservation issues, space constraints, duplication of content, or they fall outside our collecting scope.

There there may be exceptions made on a case-by-case basis:

- Trophies and plaques

- Yearbooks
- Issues of the *Reporter* magazine
- Published materials
- Periodicals
- Generic RIT marketing materials, such as t-shirts, mugs, mouse pads, string backpacks
- Reprints, photocopies, and newspaper clippings

Condition is of major importance. We carefully assess the condition of collections and items in all formats to determine whether we have the capability to steward them. We avoid acquiring materials in poor physical condition (e.g. badly stained and soiled, molded, mildewed, very brittle, damaged binding) unless their rarity or intrinsic importance offsets the physical defects.

Connection with other collection materials. Do the materials relate to other materials in the collections? Do they either complement or enhance other holdings? If the materials are on a subject actively collected by another distinctive collections department on campus (listed and described below) or at another institution, we might refer you to them.

DEACCESSIONING

The relevance of materials in the RIT Archives can and will change over time. Periodic reappraisal of the collection may be done to identify items which no longer fit the criteria for inclusion in the collection. Deselection and withdrawal will be done at the discretion of RIT Archives staff within the constraints of donor agreements. Decisions will be made in line with professional guidelines and best practices, including the Society of American Archivists' (2012) *Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning*.

Other Distinctive Collections at RIT

Cary Graphic Arts Collection

Cary Graphic Arts Collection is one of the world's premier libraries on graphic communication history and practices. Its growing library holds over 45,000 volumes and over 130 archival collections.

To learn more about the Cary Graphic Arts Collection or to get in contact with them, visit their website:

<https://www.rit.edu/carycollection/>

Vignelli Archives

Home to the professional archives of designers Lella and Massimo Vignelli, whose collections include examples of industrial and product design, graphics and publication

design, corporate identity programs, architectural graphics, exhibitions, interiors, clothing, and furniture design.

To learn more about the Vignelli Archives or to get in contact with them, visit their website:

<https://www.rit.edu/vignelllicenter/vignelli-archives>

The Joseph F. and Helen C. Dyer Arts Center at NTID

Several state-of-the-art galleries showcase artworks created by current students, alumni, and artists who are nationally and internationally renowned. All of these artists are deaf, hard of hearing, and/or allies of the Deaf community. The NTID permanent collection of art is also exhibited in the Dyer Arts Center.

To learn more about the Dyer Arts Center at NTID or to get in contact with them, visit their website: <https://www.rit.edu/ntid/dyerarts-center>

Image Permanence Institute

The Image Permanence Institute (IPI) is a university-based research center in the College of Art and Design at RIT dedicated to supporting the preservation of cultural heritage collections in libraries, archives, and museums around the world. In addition, it holds several unique research collections mostly related to photographic processes and research in the field of photography.

Visit <https://imagepermanenceinstitute.org/> for more information on their programs and resources.